

Gentlemen

I am writing in support of Raised Bill 999. In particular, the common sense requirement that "A provider, as defined in section 19a-175 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, who holds the highest classification of licensure or certification from the Department of Public Health under chapters 368d and 384d of the general statutes shall be responsible for making decisions concerning patient care on the scene of an emergency medical call." Although it seems obvious on its face that a trained and certified medical provider should be responsible for making medical decisions concerning patient care, it happens that very often Fire department personnel on medical scenes believe that they are in charge of medical procedures for patients.

I am a practicing Advanced Emergency Medical Technician for the Town of Stratford Emergency Medical Service. Quite often at medical scenes that I have responded to, Fire Department personnel have delayed transport, treated patients improperly and/or refused to cooperate with Emergency Medical personnel. In the overwhelming majority of cases these are purely medical calls which are the bulk of our activities. Only rarely, perhaps once or twice per year, is there a major incident call where initiation of ICS protocols are required. In the normal course of business, the Fire Department responds to any priority one call (as determined by Dispatch) simply because they are "First Responders". On these scenes, we simply do not have the time to explain to Fire department personnel the reasons underlying our decisions concerning patient care or the time to debate it. Additionally, Fire Department personnel tend to have a protocol for everything and nothing.

To be sure, at motor vehicle accidents requiring extrication, entering a blocked structure or achieving access to a patient, the Fire Departments are uniquely qualified and belong in command and control. However, common sense dictates that command and control be exercised by those specifically trained in assessment, treatment and transport of medical patients. One would not ordinarily think that a firefighter would dispute the knowledge and decisions of an EMT, AEMT or Paramedic on a medical scene. Sadly that is the case and that is why I support this common sense approach. It is apparent that this simple idea must be written into law.

Sincerely,

David Blumstein, BA, MBA, AEMT